

Enactment of Teacher Identity in Resolving Student Disagreements in Small Group Peer Interactions

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Abstract

This study presents a sequential analysis of the enactment of teacher identity in closing disagreements among students in small group peer interactions in an advanced academic writing class. In doing so, it discusses: (a) the micro-details of how oppositional stances and opinions are constructed, challenged and/or defended; (b) the sequential environment where the teacher's situated identity is invoked; and (c) the procedural consequence of the teacher's enacting of such an identity. Detailed analysis shows two major ways that the teacher's identity is invoked. First, by directing an inquiry or invitation to the teacher, students display their sensitivity to the uneven distribution of knowledge among the students and the teacher, thus publicly ratifying the latter's knowing-recipient status. Second, the teacher makes his/her situated identity relevant by self-selecting himself /herself as somebody with the institutionally accredited knowledge and competence to respond to the students. These two patterns are recognized as *solicited teacher intervention* and *unsolicited teacher intervention* respectively in this paper. The findings suggest that the enactment of teacher identity dismantles the interactional deadlock among the students and helps them with the task process.

KEYWORDS: DISAGREEMENT, IDENTITY, CONVERSATION ANALYSIS, ACADEMIC WRITING, GROUP WORK, PEER INTERACTION

1 Introduction

Research reports on group work and collaborative learning have claimed multiple benefits for students working in groups (e.g. Storch 2005). As researchers and teachers remain convinced of the value of group work, they have continued to explore the context of second language writing by observing second language classrooms, interviewing students and their teachers and studying the texts second language writers produce (Leki 2001; Frazier 2007). Findings from such studies, however, give only a partial picture of the overall social process of group work. The learning of academic English in peer groups can be considered more as the construction of a social reality in which discourse roles and identities are not fixed in advance, but have to be negotiated moment-by-moment. Therefore, if many of the challenges encountered by learners are interactional in nature, explicit attention to interaction processes should be the first step in order to understand how students interpret and execute tasks as group work phenomena (Kramsch 1985).

Though disagreements are frequent interactional phenomena in student discussions and collaborations in university classrooms (Waring 2001), there is a lack of sufficient studies that investigate how the identities and roles of teachers and students are negotiated in order to resolve student disagreements in their interactions. The study of such disagreements and their closings is both important and necessary because relatively autonomous group work may require students to execute the assigned tasks as well as maintain social relationships. In addition, failure to successfully exit from interactional conflicts may pose challenges in task completion as well as in group harmony. In this paper, I present a sequential analysis of the enactment of teacher identity in closing disagreements among the students in small group peer interactions in an advanced academic writing class. In doing so, I discuss: (a) the micro-details of how oppositional stances and opinions are constructed, challenged and/or defended; (b) the sequential environment

where the teacher's situated identity is invoked; and (c) the procedural consequence of the teacher's enacting of such identity. I take the position endogenous to conversation analysis (CA) that institutionality, identities and disagreements are members' categories and concerns instead of *a priori* labels externally imposed to participants by analysts (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998).

2 Classroom discourse, institutionality and identities

Within research in classroom interactions, there has been a significant emphasis placed on teacher and student roles and identities in order to explain the participation framework of teaching-learning activities in language classrooms. First proposed as a 'teaching cycle' by Bellack et al. (1966), the IRF sequence (teacher initiation– student response– teacher feedback) (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975) or IRE (initiation– response– evaluation (Mehan 1979) has been a central organizational framework to study classroom discourse (Waring 2009). Though the basic IRF/IRE structure and its fundamentally instructional orientation are widely regarded as pervasive forms of classroom discourse (Richards 2006), it is important to note that the IRF is not the only interaction that takes place in classrooms (Markee and Kasper 2004; Walsh 2006; Waring 2009). Recent research on interactions in classroom contexts employing the framework of conversation analysis (e.g. Pochon-Berger 2011; Seedhouse and Almutairi 2009) has begun to question the pre-given roles of teacher and student to account for the flow of classroom social interaction.

In order to discuss the institutional mechanisms of classroom discourse, this paper adheres to Drew and Heritage's (1992) characterization of institutional discourse as involving 'an orientation by at least one of the participants to some core goal, task, or identity (or set of them) conventionally associated with the institution in question' (p. 22). Following Seedhouse's

(1996) suggestion, I take an ‘institutional discourse approach’ where classroom discourse is regarded as ‘an institutional variety of discourse, in which interactional elements correspond neatly to institutional goals’ (p. 16). That is, student interactions are mostly linked to the pedagogical goals and are also subject to evaluation by the teacher in some way. Analysis of classroom discourse can scrutinize ‘the dynamic nature of identity construction and its relationship to the development of ongoing talk’ (Richards 2006: 52). From the conversation analytic approach, ‘institutionality’ or institutional identities are emergent properties of talk-in-interaction (Benwell and Stokoe 2006). This means we should take identities for analytical consideration only when they seem to have some visible effect on how the interaction pans out (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998). Within the limited literature of teacher and student identities and roles in classroom contexts, however, such roles and identities have for the most part been characterized as relatively static (Richards 2006).

Developed within the CA tradition, Zimmerman’s (1998) treatment of different categories of identity provides a useful apparatus for examining how oriented-to identities provide both *proximal* context with the turn-by-turn orientation to developing sequences of action at the interactional level and *distal* context for social activities with the oriented-to ‘extra-situational’ agendas. Zimmerman proposes three aspects of identity that are relevant to the analysis of interaction: discourse identity, situated identity and transportable identity. Discourse identity is ‘integral to the moment-by-moment organization of the interaction’ (p. 90) and relates to the specific segment or sequence within discourse: questioner/answerer, inviter/invitee, requester/requested, expert/novice, etc. Situated identities come into play in situations that ‘are effectively brought into being and sustained by participants engaging in activities and respecting agendas that display an orientation to, and alignment of, particular identity sets’ (p. 90). For

example, in the classroom context, relevant situated identities would be teacher and student. Richards (2006) labels them as ‘default’ identities. Transportable identities are ‘usually visible, that is, assignable or claimable on the basis of physical or culturally based insignia which furnish the intersubjective basis for categorization’ (p. 91), for example, categories of age, race, gender or ethnicity.

As an analytical focus in the present study, I take situated identities of ‘teacher’ and ‘student’ as omnipresent (Richards 2006). However, such omnipresence cannot be assumed simply by virtue of the institutional setting (Zimmerman and Boden 1991) of the classroom. The evidence of situated or institutional identities rests on the underlying alignment of discourse identities (Zimmerman 1998). This implies that analysts should hold off from saying this person is a teacher until and unless there is some evidence in the interaction that his/her behavior is consequential as the behavior of a teacher. It can also be argued that it is the institutional right and obligation of the teacher to be an epistemic and managerial authority in the classroom by asking questions, issuing instructions and pursuing evaluations while the students, addressing their responses to the teacher, respond directly to these turns (Richards 2006). One such institutional role of the teacher arguably involves facilitating pedagogic tasks by resolving student conflicts and disagreements when this is made relevant in interactions. I treat such a sequential action as an instance of invoking and enacting the teacher’s situated identity. This will be a topic of discussion in the next section.

3 Invoking authoritative identity in resolving disagreements and conflicts

Studies from the ethnomethodological tradition show that participants use varied patterns and interactional resources to close disagreements or conflict talks. Many previous studies report that most conflict episodes end with both parties continuing to hold contrary views. For example, M. Goodwin (1990) analyzed children's argument talks and concluded: the end of an argument generally occurs without any sharp indication that either position has 'won' or 'lost'. Dersley and Wootton (2001) also make a similar observation in family complaints episodes where one member of the talk unilaterally walks out from the dispute scene, without necessarily achieving some form of resolution. Findings from studies of interactions involving dominant third parties, on the other hand, show that they have the interactional or institutional power to make an intervention in order to resolve disagreements or conflicts between disputing parties. Vuchinich (1990) reports findings from a family dinner talk where parents as dominant members can 'break up' a conflict between their children. In such contexts, one or both of the disputing parties can make a concession to the intervening dominant member and close the conflict. Management of conflict is a great topical interest in conflict resolution contexts as well. For example, mediation sessions provide an interactional organization for terminating arguments (Gracia 1991). Greatbatch and Dingwall (1997) analyze data from divorce mediation sessions and show that disputants can address their turns to the mediators as they justify and/or substantiate their positions. Mediators as a third party may seek clarifications, solicit or offer compromises, shift to a different topic, and/or negatively sanction the disputants in order to close arguments. Such a closing then breaks the interactional deadlock at the moment and provides an opportunity for the participants to make a transition to the next action.

The topic of the enactment of teacher identity in breaking one type of student participation framework, that is, arguments or disagreements in the present context, in order to

move to the next is an under-researched topic in second language classroom settings. The immediately relevant CA study is by Markee (2004) from a relatively content-based second language course. Though his study does not specifically address student disagreements, it focuses on what happens after the students nominate the teacher as the next speaker. Markee observed that when the students ask questions to the teacher during small group interactions, they make a transition from peer-based speech exchange system to pre-allocated, problem solving talk controlled by the teacher. Markee recognized such occasions as zones of interactional transitions (ZIT). However, the present study differs from Markee's study in two important ways. First, the students in the present context are learning to become members of the academic writing communities in their respective disciplines as opposed to learning communication skills from a heavily content-based course. Secondly, my analytical focus lies on the interactional occasions preceding the teacher's enactment of his/her institutional role, unlike Markee's focus on details of what happens after the teacher's turn. This study, thus, extends findings from previous research to the L2 classroom context by specifically examining teacher-as-the-dominant-third-party's enacting of his/her identity in resolving student disagreements and helping them with their pedagogic tasks.

4 Participants and Data

The participants in this study were seven international graduate students who were enrolled in an advanced academic writing course in an English as a second language (ESL) institute at a large university in the United States. The data come from approximately twelve hours of video-recorded classroom interactions. Students worked in two groups to discuss academic writing

issues and/or collaboratively compose texts and the teacher was an overhearer of those interactions. These data were collected at different times during the Fall semester of 2009. The official approval of the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, and an informed consent was sought from the participants before they were video-recorded.

After repeatedly watching the video, I found 48 disagreement episodes (see Sharma (2012) for details). Instead of assuming disagreements as pre-given psychological phenomena, I looked for the instances where the participants pursued their oppositional stances or opinions in a moment-by-moment basis. Using the standard conventions of CA (e.g. ten Have 2007), I transcribed the audio versions of all data, paying specific attention to temporal and prosodic features of talk. Transcription conventions are given in the appendix. Subsequently I watched the video to add embodied actions. For the purpose of the present paper, I analyzed those sequences line by line, specifically paying attention to the contexts where the teacher’s institutional identity was procedurally made relevant. In analyzing the data, I also draw on the concept of participation frameworks – ‘actions demonstrating forms of involvement performed by parties within evolving structures of talk’ (Goodwin and Goodwin 2004: 222) – to discuss participants’ deployment of embodied actions in constructing and displaying their stances and positions in interaction (Goffman 1981). I have used pseudonyms for the participants. However, I have got their consent to show faces in the graphics in the data.

5 Analysis

There were eleven disagreement episodes in the collection where the teacher's identity was invoked and disagreements among the students were closed. I found two major patterns in such actions: solicitation of the teacher intervention by the students and voluntary intervention by the teacher. For the detailed analysis, I examine variations within these two patterns and include their representative excerpts as illustrations.

5.1 Solicited teacher intervention

One of the features of arguments or disagreements in group discussions is to challenge the opponents' positions as well as defend one's own position (M. Goodwin 1990; Waring 2001). Resolution of disagreement may present a complex picture when participants can neither defend their own position nor can they promptly accept the one displayed by others. In such a context, they may cast a series of doubts to display uncertainty before they reach a consensus to invoke the situated identity of the teacher. This is well exemplified in Excerpt 1. Here, Hasan (HA), Sachiko (SR), Jing (JI) and Amor (AR) are discussing strategies for avoiding plagiarism. The teacher is in front of the classroom and can overhear the student discussions. The prompt being discussed is: *Is it plagiarism to **copy** someone else's words from a **conversation**, e-mail, or phone call?* The major point of disagreement in this excerpt is Hasan's claim that the person being quoted in academic papers has to be a famous person in the field.

Excerpt 1: Needs to be a famous person

```
01    HA: You cannot just uh: say that HA said
02          ↓this.((drawing a parentheses with both hands))
03          you cannot cite that because
04          [HA is not a famous person
05    SR: [((moves her gaze from handout to HA))
06    AR: um um ((nods))
07    HA: If he or she is that much famous that
08          everybody knows then [you can cite
09    AR:                                     [You could (.) you could
10          like yeah in my: experience (.)
```


(lines 05 and 06). Hasan further elaborates his statement using an extreme case formulation ‘everybody’ (Pomerantz 1986) (lines 07 and 08). Hasan’s claim, however, is responded with an overlapping disagreement by Amor in line 09. Using her experience as a legitimization tool, Amor makes an alternative explanation and strengthens her argument by giving an example (lines 10-15). Although Hasan first seems to acknowledge Amor by initiating a collaborative completion turn (Lerner 2004), he promptly changes his state (Heritage 1984) with a token ‘oh’ and displays uncertainty ‘is that ↑valid?’ (line 16). Despite Amor’s confirmation in line 18, Hasan does not seem to be fully convinced. This is evident when he asks another confirmation-seeking question with an extreme case formulation as ‘can anybody be ↑common?’ (line 19). This is also confirmed by Amor with a positive acknowledgement token ‘yeah’ (line 21). Hasan again tries to verify Amor’s confirmation with another alternative question (lines 21-23) attempting to recycle his position from line 07. Amor reiterates her position by responding with the use of a negative token ‘no’ in line 23. In addition, she downgrades Hasan’s phrase ‘knowledgeable of that level’ (line 23) with a relatively more specific one ‘knowledgeable in the field’ (lines 25-26).

Lines 27 and 28 are an important pre-teacher intervention sequential point in moving the disagreement toward a close. Sachiko, who has no verbal contribution until now, softly responds to the ongoing argument with a no-knowledge claimer ‘°I don’t know°’ prefaced with a hesitation marker ‘uhm::’. Such a no-knowledge claim can be used as a resource by the speakers not only to display non-competence but also as a stake inoculation device (Potter 1996) to refrain from aligning with any of the arguing members in order to avoid conflict. Sachiko then proposes the possibility of asking the teacher to resolve the disagreement. This action of invoking the teacher’s situated identity is a strategic practice by a relatively neutral member in the group

(Sachiko) to direct the disagreeing members to an authoritative resource. Though this is first treated with a relatively weak acknowledgement token “°okay°” by Amor in line 29, she directs her gaze toward the teacher as a hint of her acknowledgement to solicit the teacher intervention. This sequential moment also exhibits an occasion where the participants build their joint request in talk. Then, Hasan nominates the teacher as the next speaker and formulates the group’s collective confusion with a relatively faster tempo “>we are little bit confused<” (line 30). This avowal claim is followed by an alternative type of question that shows the two opposite positions that Amor and Hasan have been displaying in the interaction (line 31). Rather than simply responding to the question with ‘yes’ or ‘no’, the teacher first makes a positive assessment of the question, followed by his explanation of the American Psychological Association (APA) citation rules. The teacher’s enacting of his institutional role resolves the conflict, simultaneously changing the classroom participation framework from relatively autonomous student-student interactions to a teaching sequence.

In Excerpt 1, the participants treat the teacher’s situated identity as that of someone who has an institutional obligation to respond to the students’ non-competence and confusion that emerged during disagreements in completing a task. The students publicly display their orientation to the categories teacher/student by treating their knowledge as an assessable object, and they do so with a group consensus on inviting the teacher’s participation. However, they may not always form such a consensus on inviting the teacher. For example, in Excerpt 2, three students are paraphrasing a co-authored text in order to learn the strategies for avoiding plagiarism. The teacher is an overhearer and the students are aware of his presence in this context.

Excerpt 2: You don’t need to cite two authors

01 YK: ((typing))

02 HU: ((looks at the handout and dictates))ah:Swales (.)
 03 Swales (.) state that
 04 YK: Oh-°but° (.)there is ((points at handout))
 05 HU: Swales- Swales - this is Swales
 06 YK: This one ((points at handout))
 07 and this one ((points at handout))
 08 RN: [((raises gaze from handout and looks at HU and YK))
 09 HU: [oh NO NO NO (.) just one.
 10 just this one ((points at handout))
 11 YK: ((types))
 12 RN: °I don't think so°.
 13 HU: [((turns posture and gaze to RN))
 14 YK: [((turns gaze to RN))
 15 RN: We need to put the na:me of two authors.(.) or
 16 only one author? ((turns gaze to YT))
 17 YK: ((raises eyebrows,shrugs shoulders,with lower lip out to RN))
 18 (0.3)
 19 RN: There are two authors((looking at HU))
 20 HU: Cite just one. ((raises forefinger))



(from the left: YK, HU, RN and teacher behind YK)
 (0.2)

21
 22 HU: ((turns posture and gaze toward the teacher))
 23 YK: ((turns posture and gaze toward the teacher))
 24 RN: ((turns gaze toward the teacher))
 25 HU: Come in. ((gestures and invites the teacher))
 26 (0.2) discuss it.



27 Te: ↑Really (.) hehehe you need to cite both ↓authors.
 28 ((Teacher explains the APA citation style))

While Yuki (YK) is typing, Hu (HU) is providing the text input by orally paraphrasing the original text provided in the handout (lines 02-03). Yuki and Hu disagree on whether they need to mention the name(s) of one author or two authors as the in-text citation (lines 02-07). Rohan

(RN), who was making no verbal contribution earlier, lifts his gaze from the handout and looks at Hu and Yuki who are advancing their differing proposals in citing the source. Disagreement between Yuki and Hu is aggravated further when Hu reiterates his position (lines 09 and 10). Yuki does not defend her position further, but resumes typing (line 11). Though the disagreement between Yuki and Hu seems to have been resolved after Yuki's concession, Rohan (line 12) starts his turn with an explicit disagreement token 'I don't think so'. This challenges the position that has so far been interactionally established. After receiving Hu and Yuki's change in stance (Goodwin 2007) as indicated in their shifting gaze and posture, Rohan advances his argument with a claim that they need to cite both authors (lines 13, 14, 15). However, he treats his own understanding and proposed suggestion as uncertain adding 'or only one author?' (line 16). Alliance with Yuki is not achieved when she refrains from making a verbal contribution, but gives a non-verbal display of uncertainty (line 17). As a next step, after a (0.3) gap in line 18, Rohan directs his proposal to Hu. Hu, however, delivers disagreement by using a directive 'Cite just one'.

Line 21 is important in that it presents a sequential point where the teacher's situated identity is made relevant by the students. There is a lack of uptake of Hu's claim by the other participants, which is indicated by a (0.2) gap. This implies that there is no noticeable sign of disagreement resolution by the participants themselves. As a next sequential action, Hu turns his posture and gaze to the teacher who was overhearing their interaction and solicits his participation to resolve the disagreement. In other words, Hu makes the teacher's institutional role relevant in order to bring this disagreement sequence to a close. This is also oriented to by Rohan and Yuki with their gazes (lines 23, 24). Also note that Hu's syntactic and lexical choice 'Come in' (0.2) 'discuss it' positions the teacher as 'outside' the group, needing to be 'invited' in.

This positioning fails to recognize the institutional participation rights of the teacher, which is why the teacher draws attention to it with ‘really’ and the subsequent laughter in line 27. Here, Hu’s invoking of teacher’s situated identity and the teacher’s subsequent uptake is procedurally consequential to end the unfolding disagreement among the group members. This collaborative action between the students and the teacher breaks the participation framework of the student-student interaction and paves ways for a more asymmetrical teacher-controlled teaching sequence. If the situational identity is not enacted by the teacher, this is accountable on institutional grounds. Solicitation for teacher intervention may imply that its producer lacks knowledge or certainty of the issue at hand and may be unable to cope with a problem without external assistance. By the same token it constitutes the recipient of the request (the teacher) as the knowledgeable, competent, and authoritative party in the exchange.

What is to be noted in Excerpt 2 is the fact that Hu’s request for the teacher to resolve disagreements is not something that comes from a group consensus, but from his individual decision although there is some shift in gaze and posture by other members that indicate an extension of the group floor to the teacher (lines 21-24). Nevertheless, this request for the teacher intervention is offered only after group members sequentially go through some kind of interactional preparation with the display of some form of no-competence claims or uncertainty (line 16 by Rohan and line 17 by Yuki), lack of necessary interactional defense by Hu (line 18), and a noticeable interruption in the interactional flow (line 21). However, when a student issues a request to the teacher for an intervention without a group consensus (unlike Excerpt 1) or without any interactional preparation (unlike Excerpt 2), this may be resisted by other members by treating it as an interactionally unexpected action. In Excerpt 3, Hasan, Amor and Rohan are discussing genre organization of journal articles based on the Introduction, Methods, Results and

Discussion (IMRD) format from their course textbook. Hasan and Rohan disagree on whether the ‘conclusion’ part of a research article is generally included within IMRD structure or it is treated as a separate section. The students are aware of the teacher’s presence as an overhearer.

Excerpt 3: Conclusion is not part of IMRD

01 HA: There is discu↓ssion (.) and conclusion separately.
 02 ((turning gaze and posture to AR))
 03 AR: yeah yeah ((nods))
 04 HA: or also there is a conclusion in the ↑discussion?
 05 RN: ((looking at the handout and scratching head))



((from the left: AR, HN and RN))

06 AR: conclusion yeah (.)there is a comparative .hhh because
 07 we are now concluding [with the actual
 08 RN: [but I think
 09 uh: conclusion is not a part of(.)↓IMRD.
 10 ((turns posture and gaze toward the teacher))



11 (0.4)
 12 HA: ((looks at RN, and then to Te and to AR))
 13 °What is that°((quietly to AR))
 14 ((AR and HA exchange smiles))



15 Te: [This is a very bi:g ↓framework
 16 [(unintelligible talk between HA and AR))
 17 RN: yeah ((looking at the teacher))=

18 [((unintelligible talk between HA and AR continues))
 19 Te: =[but (.)there can be variations.
 20 ((teacher explains the general organizational
 21 format of research papers as well as differences
 22 within them. AR, HA and RN turn gazes to teacher))



In line 01, Hasan makes an epistemic claim that the ‘discussion’ and ‘conclusion’ are two separate parts in a research paper. However, his use of a non-inverted polarity question changes his position from making an epistemic claim to seeking a confirmation from a peer (line 04). Rohan is still gazing at the handout (line 05). In line 06, instead of confirming Hasan’s request with a more direct yes/no response, Amor acknowledges and elaborates Hasan’s claim. However, before she completes her turn with an explanation of why they need to include ‘comparative’ in the conclusion part, Rohan launches a disagreement with an overlap with Amor (lines 08-10). Amor aborts her turn as incomplete. Using hedges ‘I think uh:’ as mitigating devices, Rohan frames his upcoming claim as a disagreement that constructs his position in opposition: ‘conclusion is not part of (.) ↓IMRD’ (line 09).

Lines 9-10 exhibit an important sequential occasion in terms of the enactment of teacher identity. Instead of designating the turn to the previous speakers with whom he is disagreeing, Rohan addresses his turn and adjusts his posture to the teacher. By offering an invitation to an epistemic authority, Rohan is not only trying to advance an opposition against his peers, but is also seeking an alliance and epistemic confirmation from the teacher. Authoritative alliance is not the same as peer alliance: participants may regard such an alliance as interactionally more powerful. Rohan constructs the teacher’s role as somebody who is entitled to legitimize students’ knowledge. This shows Rohan’s orientation to the situated identity of the teacher, which

comprises, among other things, expertise in matters of academic writing and genre conventions. However, as the (0.4) second gap in line 11 indicates, Rohan's solicitation for the teacher's participation is not immediately taken up by the teacher. When Rohan suddenly shifts the framework from a student-student interaction to a teacher-involved participation, Hasan and Amor appear to treat the solicitation in this sequential context as something interactionally unexpected. For example, with their exchange of smiles, they treat Rohan's action with mild amusement. The mostly likely explanation here can be that Hasan is drawing attention to Rohan's action and that is the source of Hasan and Amor's amusement. The sequential environment creates the teacher's institutional identity as both his right and an obligation (line 15).

Here the student and the teacher are enacting their institutional identities: by asking epistemic questions and responding to those questions respectively. Teacher intervention without a group consensus on issuing a request to the teacher is procedurally consequential for the change in group dynamics. This is evident when Rohan's action is resisted with a simultaneous talk by Hasan and Amor (line 14). Hasan and Amor's actions are visibly disaffiliative to Rohan's solicitation. This is also evident when the teacher's response in line 15 is first oriented to only by Rohan in line 17. However, after the participation framework shifts to a teaching sequence, all three group members accept the teacher's institutional role as epistemic and managerial authority in the classroom. This is shown with a change in stance with the participants' shift in gaze and posture toward the teacher, as shown in the still image below line 22.

5.2 Unsolicited teacher intervention

When students demonstrably create conditions for a teacher intervention, teachers usually have an institutional obligation to orient to their roles in order to facilitate the students for task completion (Van den Branden, Bygate and Norris 2009). I exemplify this with two different excerpts (Excerpt 4 and Excerpt 5). In the first one, a non-disputing peer member first tries to resolve the conflict. When this attempt does not close the disagreement, the same action becomes grounds for the teacher's unsolicited intervention. This excerpt comes from a group task where students are sharing their responses to the 'yes/no' prompts regarding whether they need to mention the items in the checklist in a cover letter for an award fellowship application. After discussing this in two separate groups, the participants move to a whole class discussion. Rohan and Hasan disagree on whether they have to mention their 'research interest' in the cover letter: Rohan displays the position 'yes' (lines 01, 06) while Hasan displays the opposite stance 'no' (line 02, 04). The teacher is an overhearer of the student interactions.

Excerpt 4: That is the objective

01 RN: Five (.)↓yes.
 02 HA: Five. Here also (.) we differed ↓yes
 03 or ↓no (.)and then we=
 04 RN: =Research area?=
 05 HA: =at the end (.)we came here to no
 06 RN: Of course (.) it's ↓yes.
 ((argument continues, 72 lines deleted))
 78 RN: You have to say (.) research interest
 79 and rela- >you have to give< little bit explanation
 80 ((turning gaze to HA)) what you want to ↓do
 81 HA: That is the objective ((quickly removes the gaze from
 82 RN to the teacher))
 83 (0.2)
 84 HA: That is the objec↓tive
 85 ((addressing the gaze to the teacher))



(from the left: HN, SR, HU and RN)

- 86 HU: °Okay okay okay°
 87 ((addresses gaze to HA and moves right hand up and down))
 88 HA: That is not the inte↑rest (.)
 89 that is not the interest ((addressing gaze to HU))
 90 HU: You go go go hehehehehe((addressing gaze to HA))
 91 (.)
 92 Te: Yeah both of you are right
 93 but area can be very ↓general (.) like sociology
 94 ((teacher explains area and interest))



In lines 78-80, Rohan claims that they (fellowship applicants) have to mention their research interest(s) in their letter and explain what they want to do as part of their research. Hasan does not disagree with the idea of giving an explanation of what an applicant wants to do, but disagrees with Rohan's use of the term 'research interest', which in his interpretation is part of the separate category of 'objectives' (line 81). Now their point of disagreement shifts from opinion-negotiation (Mori 1999) to negotiating epistemic supremacy and subordination (Heritage and Raymond 2005). After Hasan launches a disagreement with Rohan, he selects the teacher as the recipient of his request through his postural orientation and his gaze (lines 81-82). After a lack of uptake by the teacher at the transition relevance place (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974) in line 83, Hasan makes another attempt to invoke the situated identity of the teacher. Note that at this point, Hasan's turn is again primarily designed for the teacher (lines 84-85) which

seem to exclude responses from his peers. Vuchinich (1990) in analyzing family dinner talks also noticed similar interactional practices. He observed that participants invited dominant individuals to break up a conflict if they see a tactical advantage for them; for example, a possibility of winning the argument. Here, Hasan's frequent gaze toward the teacher manifests that he is oriented to the teacher's entitlement as an authority who might potentially legitimize the position Hasan is arguing for. It would have been interesting to analyze the teacher's embodied responses, if any, to Hasan's non-verbal cues, but the camera could not capture them.

After the principal disputing members fail to build a consensus and after there is a lack of uptake from the teacher, a third non-disputing member, Hu, makes an attempt to close the sequence with his repeated use of °Okay okay okay° (Schegloff 2007) and horizontal head movements in an overlap with Hasan's turn (lines 86-87). Hu demonstrably assumes the position of somebody who does not explicitly articulate his affiliation or disaffiliation to any of the members currently arguing, but orients to bringing this sequence to a close. Hasan, however, does not orient to Hu's attempt to close the disagreement, but repeats his position twice (lines 88-89). Here, the participants do not treat Hu's identity with an entitlement of the same institutional power as that of the teacher. In line 90, Hu aborts his previous attempt to close the sequence, but suggests to Hasan that he 'go' further in arguing. Hu constructs this action as an enthusiastic endorsement. After a micropause in line 91, the teacher assumes his institutional role to make an intervention and close the interactional impasse. The teacher performs his expert identity only after an attempt has been made by another student member. Though an invitation was previously offered by Hasan twice in lines 81-82 and 84-85, the teacher's enacting of his identity at this sequential environment is more self-initiated than solicited. In making the intervention, the teacher moves to a teaching sequence by first making a positive assessment for

the positions that Hasan and Rohan are advancing. Enacting such an institutional right to assess the epistemic positions constructed and displayed by the students is indicative of the epistemic authority of the assessor (Heritage and Raymond 2005).

There was one instance in the data where no attempt was made by the students to close the disagreement by themselves nor did they offer any request to the teacher for his participation. The teacher made an unsolicited intervention and resolved the disagreement. In excerpt 5, Amor, Hasan and Rohan are collaboratively paraphrasing a text. The teacher is a silent observer sitting behind the student group. A disagreement among the participants emerges when they negotiate a correct way of in-text citation while paraphrasing.

Excerpt 5: Research findings show that

01 AR: We cite the author <states that>,
02 ((gestures writing by stretching right hand))



((from the left: AR, HA and RN))

03 RN: But actually [actually
04 HA: [it differs actually
05 AR: <different?>((raises head looks at HA and RN))
06 RN: for citing after the sentence (.) we just
07 put that >name of the author< (.) and the ↓year.
08 ((turns gaze to AR))
09 AR: Maybe. °I don't know° ((looking at RN))
10 HA: But in some cases ((turning gaze to RN))
11 [you can (.) mention that.
12 RN: [((turns gaze to HA))
13 AR: [((turns gaze to HA)) um ((nods looking at HA))
14 RN: But here (.) we put author and year in brackets
15 ((looks at HA))
16 Te: You know (.)actually both can be correct. It also
17 depends on ((explains different ways of citation;
18 they finally agree to adopt Amor's proposal))

In lines 01 and 02, Amor proposes that while framing a citation accompanying this claim, they paraphrase the text mentioning the source text author outside the parentheses, with an embodied hand gesture. In line 03, Rohan, however, prepares to disagree with Amor's proposed text using contrastive markers 'but' and 'actually'. His further contribution is pre-empted when Hasan in line 04 also launches a disagreement with Amor. This action by Hasan is disaffiliative to what Amor has proposed. Amor treats the disagreements as demonstrably unexpected by initiating a repair, repeating Hasan's word 'differ' with 'different?' in a relatively slower tempo and a rising intonation (line 05). Also note that her gaze and head posture is directed to both the co-participants who issued disagreements in overlapping turns. In line 06, Rohan expands the previously aborted turn and advances an alternative suggestion that is different from Amor's. He specifically directs his turn to Amor with a gaze. According to his suggestion, they cite the name of the author followed by the date of publication in the parentheses (lines 06-08). Here these participants are basically negotiating over an appropriate way of citation in order to avoid plagiarism.

Amor treats Rohan's alternative proposal with an uncertainty marker 'Maybe' and pursues an epistemic stance with a no-knowledge claimer "I don't know" (line 09). In addition to this, Amor is constructing her disaffiliative response to Rohan and implying that she does not readily accept the counter-position. After two positions have been established, Hasan issues a disagreement in line 10 and 11 that points to an alternative possibility to Rohan's proposal and provides legitimacy to Amor's proposed way of citation. What is also notable here is Hasan's shift from his previous disaffiliative position with Amor to an affiliative position. When Hasan makes his stance visible, this is oriented to by Rohan and Amor in lines 12 and 13. Rohan

addresses his disagreement turn to the immediate speaker Hasan with his gaze in lines 14 and 15 and repeats his position.

In this sequential context where the disputing members show no signs of a consensus, the teacher makes an intervention with an assessment of student contributions. Heritage and Raymond (2005) show that such first position assessments are indexical of epistemic rights of those who produce them. Also note that rather than selecting one response as correct and another incorrect, the teacher takes a more balanced approach to positively assess the proposals by both sides of the disagreement and provides a more tentative answer (lines 16, 17). Though the group interactions in advanced academic English classes like this can be regarded as more autonomous forms of collaboration among students, the teacher's involvement to break the interactional deadlock can be seen as his part of his institutionally defined rights and obligations to help students with their tasks. Not only does the intervention by the teacher interrupt the interaction in progress, but it also reconfigures the participation framework, instantly converting the ongoing student discussion sequence into a teaching sequence. The asymmetry associated with the positioned categories 'teacher' and 'student' gets sustained until the subsequent resumption of the student-student interaction (not shown in the transcript due to limited space).

6 Conclusion

This study examined the invoking and enacting of teacher identity following student disagreements in small group peer interactions. I identified two patterns in such actions: solicitation of teacher intervention by the students and unsolicited intervention by the teacher. Similar to the Richards' (2006) observation of 'default' identities in action from classroom contexts, this analysis showed that the invoking of situated identities is characterized by

orientation to institutional roles, realized through the participants' characteristic discourse identities and with no evidence of transportable identity. Examination of professional role performance of teachers like the present one provides us useful insights for understanding both the theoretical and empirical dimensions of the interaction.

All these examples show that an unequal distribution of knowledge and communicative resources available to the participants may be used as a strategic device by the 'knowing' party 'to do something interactionally' (Drew 1991: 32). Similar social actions have also been reported in Heritage and Sefi's (1992) findings from interactions between health visitors and first-time mothers in Britain. They demonstrated that the mothers oriented to health visitors as 'baby experts' and hence knowledgeable judges of mothers' competence as caregivers, and the health visitors usually accepted their situated identities as such. A similar observation was also made by Park (2007) in her study of interaction among multilingual speakers in an educational co-dormitory setting in the US. She reports that in the midst of an unfolding interaction, participants occasion native speaker/non-native speaker identities through requester-requested and assessed-assessor discourse identities in matters of linguistic performance. In the present data set also, by directing an inquiry or invitation to the teacher, students display their sensitivity to the uneven distribution of knowledge among them, publicly ratifying the teacher's knowing-recipient status.

Finally, the findings provide micro-details of the enactment of the teacher role in a context where the task is a central component in teaching. Researchers working in task-based instruction are also keenly interested in the role of the teacher as a source of input and motivation as well as a monitor to make informed intervention into the unfolding task to critically scaffold the learners during task performance (Norris, Bygate and Van den Branden, 2009). The present study offers empirical evidence on how this is actually brought into being. A teacher's judgment

on when and how to intervene in a group task can make a difference pedagogically, so the more we understand about the mechanisms involved in such interventions, the more we are able to use such examples in teacher training. Gaining insights from the analytical details presented in this paper, future studies in task based pedagogy can explore the complex relationship between different variables of instruction –task, learner and teacher – and see how teacher interventions can be deployed as useful tools to promote learning during different instructional phases: the planning phase, the implementation phase and the performance phase.

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Appendix: Transcription Symbols

[A single bracket on the left indicates the point of overlap onset.
=	Equal signs indicates latching—no gap between two lines.
(0.2)	The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenth of a second.
(.)	A dot in parenthesis indicates a tiny gap within or between utterances.
<u>word</u>	An underlined part indicates stress or speaker emphasis.
:	Colon indicates prolongation of the immediate prior sound. Multiple colons indicate a more prolonged sound.
–	A dash indicates a cut-off.
?	A question indicates rising intonation.
.	A period indicates a stopping fall in tone.
,	A comma indicates a continuing intonation.

↓↑	Arrows indicate marked shifts into higher or lower pitch in the utterance-part immediately following the arrow.
WORD	Upper case indicates loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk.
°word°	Fragments bracketed by degree signs are relatively quieter than the surrounding talk.
<word>	right/left carets bracketing a fragment indicate that the bracketed talk is noticeably slower than the surrounding talk.
>word<	left/right carets bracketing a fragment indicate that the bracketed talk is noticeably faster than the surrounding talk.
(word)	Parenthesized words are especially dubious hearings or speaker identifications.
()	Empty parentheses indicate the transcriber's inability to hear what was said.
(())	A description enclosed in double parentheses indicates a non-verbal activity.

(Transcription developed by Gail Jefferson, adapted from ten Have, 2007).

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